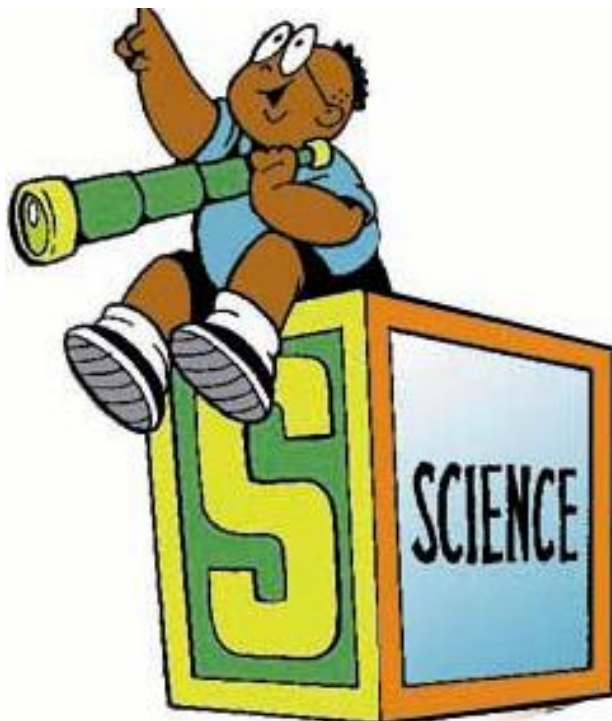


**STAR**  
**(Standards That Are Reported)**  
**SCIENCE STANDARDS**  
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## **Science STAR Standards**

### **Standards That Are Reported (STAR) – *beginning in 2005-06 for science***

In order to reduce the amount of time and effort needed to assess and report science standards, a subset of science standards have been designated as STAR Standards for grade levels 2-4, 5-8, and 9-12. It is expected that all science standards will be taught, assessed, and reported at the local level. However only those standards identified as STAR Standards will be reported to the Nebraska Department of Education. In order to assist school districts with K-12 articulation STAR Standards were also designated for grade levels K-1. Please note that K-1 standards are not required to be reported at the state level.

### **Clarification on Science 5th Grade STAR Standards**

Science standards designated as STAR Standards for 5th grade were identified from the 5-8 Science Standards. While the standards are the same at both grade 5 and grade 8, it is expected that the science content would be taught and assessed at a level appropriate for each grade level. Districts are expected to assess and report science STAR Standards at the 5th and 8th grade level. Example indicators provide insight into the depth of knowledge and level of sophistication of the science content and skills that students are expected to master at the 5th and 8th grade levels.

## First Grade Science Standards for K-12 alignment purposes only

These standards represent the first grade benchmarks that are aligned to the STAR science standards. Districts have the option to report first grade standards at the local level. Reporting at state level for first grade is not required.

### First Grade Science Standards for STAR alignment

**Science as Inquiry** requires students to combine processes and scientific knowledge with scientific reasoning and critical thinking to develop their understanding of science.

#### **1.2.1 By the end of first grade, students will develop the abilities needed to do scientific inquiry.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Ask questions about their surroundings.
- Collect scientific information from careful observation.
- Use simple equipment and tools (e.g., rulers, magnifiers) to extend the senses.
- Share findings with classmates, families, or community members.

**Physical Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

#### **1.3.1 By the end of first grade, students will develop an understanding of the characteristics of materials.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Observe and describe characteristics of common materials (e.g., paper, wood, metal, and wool).
- Observe and describe properties of common materials (e.g., how they will float, sink, mix, dissolve, or not dissolve in various liquids).
- Observe and classify materials as a solid, liquid, or gas.

**Life Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

#### **1.4.1 By the end of first grade, students will develop an understanding of the characteristics of living things.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Differentiate between living and nonliving things.
- Investigate how living things need food, water, and air to survive.
- Describe how roots, stems, and leaves serve different functions for plants.
- Compare and contrast animals by specific characteristics (e.g., body covering, diet, and locomotion).
- Observe and match organisms to their distinct habitats.

#### **1.4.2 By the end of first grade, students will develop an understanding of the life cycles of organisms.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Describe how living things change as they grow.
- Describe how offspring resemble their parents.

**Earth and Space Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**1.5.1 By the end of first grade, students will develop an understanding of the characteristics of earth materials.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Observe and identify a variety of materials (e.g., rock, soils, and water) that makes up the earth's surface.
- Identify materials of earth (e.g., water) support life.

**1.5.2 By the end of first grade, students will develop an understanding of the objects in the sky.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Recognize objects in the sky (e.g., the sun, moon, and stars).
- Investigate that the sun provides heat and light.

**1.5.3 By the end of first grade, students will develop an understanding of the changes in the earth and sky.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Describe and record daily weather changes.
- Describe and record seasonal weather changes.

## Fourth Grade Science STAR Standards

**Science as Inquiry** requires students to combine processes and scientific knowledge with scientific reasoning and critical thinking to develop their understanding of science.

### **4.2.1 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop the abilities needed to do scientific inquiry.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Ask a question about objects, organisms, and events in their surroundings.
- Plan and conduct a simple investigation.
- Use simple equipment and tools (e.g., thermometers and scales) to gather data and extend the senses.
- Use data develop reasonable explanations.
- Communicate procedures, results, and explanations of an investigation.

**Physical Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand and use.

### **4.3.1 By the end of fourth grade students will develop an understanding of the characteristics of objects and materials.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Classify objects by observable characteristics (shape, size, and color).
- Compare and contrast characteristics of common materials using tools (e.g., rulers, scales, thermometers, microscopes, and hand lenses).
- Demonstrate that materials can change from solid to liquid to gas by heating and from gas to liquid to solid by cooling.

### **4.3.2 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of the position and motion of objects.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Use reference points to describe the position of an object.
- Describe an object's motion by tracing its position over time.
- Demonstrate that the position and motion of objects can be changed by pushing or pulling.
- Demonstrate how sound is produced when objects vibrate.
- Change the pitch of sound by changing the rate of vibration.

### **4.3.3 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of light, heat, electricity, and magnetism.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Distinguish between reflection and refraction of light.
- Identify ways in which heat can be produced (e.g., burning, rubbing, or mixing one substance with another).
- Demonstrate heat can flow from one object to another by conduction.
- Use electricity to produce heat, sound or magnetic effects.
- Demonstrate electrical circuits require a complete loop through which an electrical current can pass.
- Describe the physical properties of magnets.

**Life Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**4.4.1 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of the characteristics of living things.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Describe the differences between plants and animals.
- Describe the various structures of plants and animals necessary for survival and reproduction.
- Describe how internal stimuli (e.g., hunger) and external stimuli (e.g., changes in the environment) affect behavior of living things.

**4.4.2 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of the life cycles of living things.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Describe the life cycle of an organism.
- Identify inherited characteristics of living things (e.g., color and number of eyes).
- Identify learned characteristics of living things (e.g., language or hunting for food).

**4.4.3 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of living things and environments.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Diagram a food chain.
- Explain how environmental changes affect behavior and survival of living things.
- Describe how humans and other living things cause both positive and negative changes in their environment.

**Earth and Space Science** focuses on the science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**4.5.1 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of the characteristics of earth materials.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Identify characteristics of soils, minerals, rocks, water, and the atmosphere.
- List earth materials that are used by humans (e.g., water, fossil fuels, ores, soils).
- Select the best earth material for a specific human use (e.g., marble–buildings, clay–pottery, coal–heat).
- Describe an ancient environment based on fossil evidence.

**4.5.2 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of objects in the sky.**

*Example Indicator:*

- Observe and describe how objects move in patterns (e.g., sun, moon, stars, and clouds).

**4.5.3 By the end of fourth grade, students will develop an understanding of the changes in the earth and sky.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Describe how slow processes (e.g., erosion) and rapid processes (e.g., earthquakes) change the earth's surface.
- Describe and measure changes in weather (e.g., temperature, precipitation, and wind direction and speed).

**Proposed Nebraska Science Standards  
for  
Fifth Grade STAR Standards  
(Standards That Are Reported)**

*The following Standards represent the Fifth Grade Benchmarks for Nebraska STAR Science Standards.*

**Science as Inquiry** requires students to combine processes and scientific knowledge with scientific reasoning and critical thinking to develop their understanding of science.

**5.2.1 By the end of fifth grade, student will develop the abilities needed to do scientific inquiry.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Identify questions that can be examined in a scientific investigation.
- Plan and conduct a simple investigation.
- Choose appropriate tools to make accurate observations and measurement of variables.
- Communicate explanations and scientific methods.
- Use math to gather, organize and present data and ask further questions about data interpretation and analysis.

**Physical Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand and use.

**5.3.2 By the end of fifth grade, students will develop an understanding of motion and forces.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the motion of an object by its position, direction of motion and speed.

**Life Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**5.4.1 By the end of fifth grade, students will develop an understanding of the structure and function in living systems.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the human body systems and how they interact.
- Investigate and explain how disease affects the structure and/or function of an organism.

**Earth and Space Science** focuses on the science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**5.5.1 By the end of fifth grade, students will develop an understanding of the structure of the earth.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the crust, mantle, and core of the earth.
- Investigate and describe the rock cycle.

# **Eighth Grade Science STAR Standards**

**Science as Inquiry** requires students to combine processes and scientific knowledge with scientific reasoning and critical thinking to develop their understanding of science.

## **8.2.1 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop the abilities needed to do scientific inquiry.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Identify questions and form hypotheses that can be examined through scientific investigations.
- Design and conduct a scientific investigation.
- Use appropriate tools and techniques to gather, analyze, and interpret data.
- Given evidence, develop descriptions, explanations, predictions, and models.
- Show the relationship between evidence and explanations.
- Recognize and analyze alternative explanations and predictions.
- Communicate scientific procedures and explanations.
- Use mathematics in scientific inquiry.

**Physical Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand and use.

## **8.3.1 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of properties and changes of properties in matter.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and demonstrate that characteristic properties of a substance (e.g., density, boiling point, and solubility) do not depend on the amount of the substance.
- Observe, describe, and measure physical and chemical properties of matter.
- Explain that all matter is composed of elements which may combine in a variety of ways to form compounds.
- Investigate and explain that in chemical reactions new properties are created and total mass is conserved.

## **8.3.2 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of motion and forces.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the motion of an object by its position, direction of motion, and speed.
- Investigate and demonstrate that the speed and/or direction of an object changes when a force is applied to that object.

## **8.3.3 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of the forms of energy and how energy is transferred.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the transfer of light energy.
- Investigate and demonstrate how energy is transferred using simple machines.
- Investigate and describe how heat is transferred from a warmer object to a cooler object until both reach the same temperature.
- Investigate and describe the properties and transfer of sound energy.
- Investigate and describe the transfer of energy from electrical and magnetic sources to different energy forms (e.g., heat, light, sound, and chemical).



**Life Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**8.4.1 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of the structure and function in living systems.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the levels of organizations: cells, tissues, organs, organ systems, whole organisms, and ecosystems.
- Investigate and demonstrate that all living things are composed of cells.
- Investigate and explain how cells sustain life through functions (e.g., growth and nutrition).
- Investigate and describe the specialized function performed by specialized cells (e.g., muscular and skeletal) in multicellular organisms.
- Investigate and describe the human body systems and how they interact.
- Investigate and explain how disease affects the structure and/or function of an organism.

**8.4.2 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of reproduction and heredity.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe how all organisms reproduce through sexual or asexual reproduction.
- Investigate and describe that in many species, offspring receive hereditary information from the female (eggs) and male (sperm).
- Investigate and explain that chromosomes contain genes which influence heredity.
- Investigate and describe the effects of inherited traits and environmental influences on an organism's characteristics.

**8.4.3 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of regulation and behavior.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and explain how organisms' behaviors enhance their abilities to obtain and use resources, grow, and reproduce.
- Investigate and examine how an organism senses change in its internal or external environment and responds to keep conditions within a required range.
- Investigate and explain how behavior is a response to internal and external stimuli determined by heredity and experience.
- Investigate and explain how an organism's behavior evolves through environmental adaptation.

**8.4.4 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of populations and ecosystems.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe that a population consists of all individuals of a species at a given place and time.
- Investigate and analyze the living and nonliving factors that determine the number of organisms an ecosystem can support.
- Describe an organism by the function it serves in an ecosystem (e.g., producer, consumer, and decomposer).
- Investigate and explain how energy entering ecosystems as sunlight is transferred by producers into chemical energy through photosynthesis, and that energy then passes from organism to organism in food webs.

**8.4.5 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of diversity and adaptations of organisms.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Explain how internal structures, similarity of chemical processes, (e.g., photosynthesis and respiration) and evidence of common ancestry demonstrate unity among organisms.
- Investigate and explain how organisms adapt to living and nonliving factors in a biome.
- Investigate and explain how environmental changes created by nature and by humans may cause species extinction.

**Earth and Space Science** focuses on the science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**8.5.1 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of the structure of the earth.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the crust, mantle, and core of the earth.
- Investigate and describe how a combination of constructive and destructive forces create land forms.
- Investigate and describe the composition of soils.
- Investigate and describe the water cycle.
- Investigate and describe the composition of the atmosphere at different altitudes.
- Investigate and describe the influence of topography, location, and oceans on climate.
- Investigate and describe the effect of living organisms on weathering and the atmosphere.

**8.5.2 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of the earth's history.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe how earth processes that occur today (e.g., volcanism, weather, and erosion) are similar to those that occurred in the past.
- Investigate and use the fossil record to provide evidence and explain how environmental conditions have changed.

**8.5.3 By the end of eighth grade, students will develop an understanding of the earth in the solar system.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and list the components of the solar system.
- Investigate and describe the motion of objects in the solar system that support the concepts of day, year, eclipses, and phases of the moon.
- Investigate and describe the influence of gravity on objects in the solar system.
- Investigate and describe the sun as the major source of energy that influences the atmosphere and the earth's surface.
- Investigate and describe the effect of the tilt of the earth's axis on seasons.

## Twelfth Grade Science STAR Standards

**Science as Inquiry** requires students to combine processes and scientific knowledge with scientific reasoning and critical thinking to develop their understanding of science.

### **12.2.1 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop the abilities needed to do scientific inquiry.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Formulate questions and identify concepts that guide scientific investigations.
- Design and conduct scientific investigations.
- Use technology and mathematics to improve investigations and communications.
- Formulate and revise scientific explanations and models using logic and evidence.
- Recognize and analyze alternative explanations and models.
- Communicate and defend a scientific argument.

**Physical Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand and use.

### **12.3.1 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the structure of the atom.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the structure of atoms, focusing on properties of subatomic particles.
- Investigate and explain the types of nuclear reactions.
- Investigate and describe the effect of electrical and nuclear forces which hold atoms together.

### **12.3.2 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the structure and properties of matter.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and understand that atoms interact with one another by transferring or sharing electrons.
- Investigate and explain the periodic table of elements in terms of repeating patterns of physical and chemical properties.
- Investigate and describe how the structure of an atom determines the chemical properties of an element.
- Investigate and explain how the interactions among the molecules of a compound determine its physical and chemical properties.
- Investigate and use changes in energy to explain the differences among the states of matter.
- Investigate and describe the bonding of carbon atoms in chains and rings to produce compounds essential to life.

### **12.3.3 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of chemical reactions.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe common chemical reactions.
- Investigate and describe the change of energy as a result of chemical reactions.
- Investigate and describe how electrons are involved in bond formation during chemical reactions.
- Investigate and describe the factors influencing the rates of chemical reactions, including catalysts.

**12.3.4 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of motions and forces.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and understand the effect of forces on the motion of objects.
- Investigate and understand gravity as an attractive force that each mass exerts on any other mass.
- Investigate and understand electrical force as a force that exists between any two charged objects.
- Investigate and describe an electric field a magnetic field, and the interaction between them.

**12.3.5 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the conservation of energy and increase in disorder.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Understand that the total energy in the universe is constant and can never be destroyed.
- Investigate and distinguish between kinetic energy and potential energy.
- Investigate and describe heat transfer in terms of conduction, convection, and radiation.
- Investigate and give examples of how systems tend to become more disorderly over time.

**12.3.6 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the interactions of energy and matter.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and understand that all waves possess and transfer energy.
- Understand that electromagnetic waves result when a charged object accelerates.
- Investigate and illustrate how wavelength and frequency of waves are inversely related.
- Investigate and understand that the energy of waves can be changed into other forms of energy, just as other forms of energy can be transformed into wave energy.
- Investigate and understand that atoms or molecules can be identified by spectral analysis.
- Investigate and describe how the composition and temperature of a material affect electron flow.

**Life Science** focuses on science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**12.4.1 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the cell.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe the form and function of subcellular structures that regulate cell activities.
- Investigate and describe cell functions (e.g., photosynthesis, respiration, cell division).
- Investigate and understand that complex multicellular organisms are formed as highly organized arrangements of differentiated cells.

**12.4.2 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the molecular basis of heredity.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe how DNA carries the genetic code.
- Investigate and understand that genetic variation occurs when genetic information is transmitted during sexual reproduction.
- Investigate and explain how some mutations could help, harm or have no effect on individual organisms.
- Investigate and explain how mutations in sex cells, but not in body cells, could be passed on to offspring.

**12.4.3 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the theory of biological evolution.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Understand that the concept of biological evolution is a theory which explains the consequence of the interactions of: (1) the potential for a species to increase its numbers; (2) the genetic variability of offspring due to mutation and recombination of genes; (3) a finite supply of the resources of life; and (4) the ensuing selection by the environment of those offspring better able to survive and leave offspring.
- Investigate and use the theory of biological evolution to explain diversity of life.
- Investigate whether natural selection provides a scientific explanation of the fossil record and the molecular similarities among the diverse species of living organisms.
- Investigate and use biological classifications based on similarities.

**12.4.4 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the interdependence of organisms.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and understand that atoms and molecules cycle among living and nonliving components of the biosphere.
- Investigate and describe the flow of energy through ecosystems, in one direction, from producers to herbivores to carnivores and decomposers.
- Investigate and cite examples of organisms cooperating and competing in ecosystems.
- Investigate and understand that interactions among organisms are affected by the conflict between an organism's capacity to produce infinite populations and the finite amount of resources.
- Investigate and describe how humans modify the ecosystem as a result of population growth, technology, and consumption.

**12.4.5 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of matter, energy, and organization in living systems.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and understand that living systems require a constant input of energy to maintain their chemical and physical organization.
- Investigate and understand that producers use solar energy to combine molecules of carbon dioxide and water into organic compounds.
- Investigate and explain how distribution and abundance of different organisms in ecosystems are limited by the availability of matter and energy and the ability of the ecosystem to recycle materials.

**12.4.6 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of the behavior of organisms.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and describe how nervous systems function in multicellular animals.
- Investigate and describe how organisms respond to internal changes and external stimuli.
- Investigate and explain how the behavioral patterns of organisms have evolved through natural selection.
- Investigate and understand that behavioral biology relates to humans since it provides links to psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

**Earth and Space Science** focuses on the science facts, concepts, principles, theories, and models that are important for all students to know, understand, and use.

**12.5.1 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of energy in the earth system.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Investigate and distinguish between internal sources of energy (e.g., radioactive decay and gravitational energy) and external sources of energy (e.g., the sun), and explaining how both provide energy to the earth systems.
- Investigate and explain how the outward transfer of earth's internal heat drives convection in the mantle that propels the plates comprising the earth's surface.
- Investigate and explain how global climate is determined by energy transfer from the sun and is influenced by dynamic processes (e.g., cloud formation and the earth's rotation) and static conditions (e.g., the position of mountain ranges and oceans).

**12.5.2 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop an understanding of geochemical cycles.**

*Example Indicator:*

- Investigate and diagram how elements and compounds on earth move among reservoirs in the solid earth, oceans, atmosphere, and organisms as part of geochemical cycles.

**12.5.3 By the end of twelfth grade, students will develop a scientific understanding of the origin of the earth system.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Contrast the early earth with the planet we live on today.
- Investigate and estimate geologic time by observing rock sequences and using fossils to correlate the sequences at various locations.
- Predict when rocks were formed by using known decay rates of radioactive isotopes in rocks.
- Investigate and relate how the interactions among the solid earth, oceans, atmosphere, and organisms affect the ongoing evolution of the earth.

**12.5.4 By the end of twelfth grade students will develop a scientific understanding of the origin of the universe.**

*Example Indicators:*

- Describe and analyze various theories on the origin of the universe.
- Describe various theories on the formation of galaxies.
- Describe the life cycle of a star.